

Developing Agents of Change

**A Monograph
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**SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES
MONOGRAPH APPROVAL
KIRK C. DORR**

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Abstract

DEVELOPING AGENTS OF CHANGE by MAJOR Kirk C. Dorr, USA, 54 pages.

The Army in the early 1980's experienced a flourish of intellectual growth actuated by the negative experiences of many of its young officers during the Vietnam War and their dissatisfaction with the standards in professional military education. The focus of the Army at the time was planning and training the force to counter the Cold War military threat of the Warsaw Pact. An environment of increasing complexity was evolving as concurrent efforts to improve recruiting, reform training and doctrine, and field a new generation of major weapon systems forced Army leaders to seek better ways to bring all of these advancements together.

In 1981, then Lieutenant Colonel Huba Wass de Czege published an article critical of the conventional military education approach of mid-career Army field grade officers. This was the genesis for the formation of the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS). By conceptual design SAMS would provide a broad military education in the science and art of war at the tactical and operational levels beyond the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) course curriculum in terms of theoretical depth and application. SAMS officially began in 1984 at Fort Leavenworth as a rigorous, yearlong course of study following attendance at CGSC.

The purpose of SAMS, the curriculum, selection process, and post-SAMS assignment policies remain relatively unchanged since its inception. What has continued to evolve throughout the school's tenure is the accelerated rate of change in service missions, technology, and battlefield conditions graduates must deal with upon arrival in the field. SAMS was designed for talented officers to develop a common cultural perspective on problem solving and war fighting that would facilitate the rapid adaptation to these types of realities.

This monograph discusses the challenges of maintaining the Army's effectiveness through the process of change. As conditions of warfare change, the methods and techniques of our doctrine must evolve with them. Knowing what to change will be more difficult and risk-laden as the rapid rate of technology and the relative brevity of future operations across the spectrum of conflict combine to create a situation where the consequences of peacetime choices become irretrievable in war. This study addresses the role of professional military education in creating cultural change within the military. This paper examines the model of the Prussian, later German Kriegssakademie, to demonstrate how modern military organizations can be effective in shaping culture to attain high performance on the battlefield.

The implementation of SAMS reflected weaknesses in the Army culture and the educational institutions that sustained it. The Army Officer Education System (OES) is now adapting to meet the emerging requirements of full spectrum operations and the transforming Army. On the eve of its twentieth anniversary, SAMS should also conduct a review of its systems and practices to ensure the year of expanded study meets the demands of the Army, the joint environment, and its students. A review of SAMS can ensure the maintenance of the highest standards and the programs adherence to the spirit and mission for which it was created.

The tendency of an overburdened American military emphasizes action, not thoughtful reflection; yet never was thinking more necessary. The infusion of the Army with officers from SAMS with a common cultural base with similar mental references serves as a collective that can institutionalize military excellence and cope with complex problems at an educated level. The self-regenerating nature of SAMS removes any reliance upon the appearance of one or more military geniuses in the force because it consistently produces outstanding, competent officers. Over time, the common cultural bias established through advanced education can affect changes in service culture.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Knowing why, when and how to change is key to maintaining an Army's effectiveness.¹

Brigadier General (Retired) Huba Wass de Czege

The Armed Services of the United States are currently conducting major operations in the country of Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Undoubtedly, many graduates of the School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) are playing an integral role in developing plans for the employment of our forces, while others may be leading formations of soldiers in combat as commanders. These men and women are beneficiaries of a unique educational experience that has served a select group of officers and the military well for almost twenty years. The formation of SAMS was due in large part to the vision of several prominent and determined officers who identified the need for strong institutional leadership as well as individual leadership in the Army.

In 1981, on a boat on the Yangtze River in China, Lieutenant Colonel Huba Wass de Czege's proposed concept of establishing a second year of study for select Army Command and Staff College (CGSC) graduates was evolving into reality.² Wass de Czege, an infantryman, veteran of multiple combat tours in Vietnam, Harvard trained political scientist, and recently appointed project chair of the effort to revise FM 100-5 outlined the concept to General William R. Richardson, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans.³ Wass de Czege had recently published an article critical of the conventional military education approach of mid-

¹Colonel Huba Wass de Czege, "How to Change an Army," *Military Review*, (November 1984), 33.

²United States Army Combined Arms Center 1982-84, *Annual Historical Review*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, CAC History Office, 1989.

³Dr. Richard M. Swain, *Filling the Void: The Operational Art and the U.S. Army*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, School of Advanced Military Studies): 30.

career Army field grade officers. General Richardson agreed with Wass de Czege's assertion that the systemic problem within CGSC was the myopic focus on the study of the tactical level of warfare. Richardson fully supported the initiative for a program of deeper and broader education in the science and art of how to prepare for and conduct war. Both officers identified that such a program within the officer education system would provide significant long-term benefits for the Army.

The Army in the early 1980s experienced a flourish of intellectual growth actuated by the negative experiences of many of its young officers during the Vietnam War and their dissatisfaction with the standards in professional military education. The focus of the Army at this time was planning and training the force to counter the Cold War military threat of the Warsaw Pact. An environment of increasing complexity was evolving as concurrent efforts to improve recruiting, reform training and doctrine, and field a new generation of major weapon systems forced Army leaders to seek better ways to bring all of these advancements together.

Wass de Czege's proposed second year of study following CGSC would be utilized to study large unit operations and to explore the Army's evolving doctrinal understanding of the Operational Level of War.⁴ As an Army War College Fellow from June 1982 to June 1983, Wass de Czege designed a program to teach the operational level of war to select CGSC graduates who volunteered to spend another year at Fort Leavenworth.⁵ He received permission to set up a pilot program within the CGSC from General Glenn Otis, TRADOC commander.⁶ In June 1983, shortly after Richardson assumed command of TRADOC, CGSC founded the experimental

⁴Ibid.

⁵Huba Wass de Czege, *Army Staff College Level Training Study* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1983): F-4.

⁶United States Army Combined Arms Center 1982-84, *Annual Historical Review* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CAC History Office, 1989).

Advanced Military Studies Department with Wass de Czege as director.⁷ This pilot initiative graduated its first class of students in May of 1984. General John Wickham, Army Chief of Staff during 1983-87, approved the permanent stature of the program, which was expanded and redesignated the School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) in October 1984.⁸

Although the implementation of SAMS represented a new seriousness about doctrine and education, its formation also signaled an admission of deficiencies in the standard Army officer education system and the resulting intellectual stagnation within the officer ranks. In effect, the creation of SAMS could be interpreted as an admission that the regular intermediate level educational program was not serving the needs of commanders in the field. Operational art and the increasing importance of joint operations demanded more from commanders and their staffs than ever before. Wass de Czege believed that the old system was instructing the management of war while avoiding the facilitation of creative thought in the development of strategic, operational and tactical concepts.⁹ SAMS would “enhance the ability of selected officers to think clearly, logically, and rapidly, to conceptualize and innovate, to teach and develop subordinates, to integrate the work of specialists and to create high-performing staffs that would anticipate and adapt to change.”¹⁰

By limiting enrollment to fifty, SAMS accepted only officers with an intellectual aptitude for the study of operations. To ensure attendance by quality officers, admission was by voluntary application, competitive exam, and interview. To facilitate high academic standards, a substantial reading load, personal attention by a permanent seminar leader, and written and oral

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Colonel Huba Wass de Czege, “How to Change an Army,” *Military Review*. (November 1984): 33-49.

¹⁰Colonel Huba Wass de Czege, *Army Staff College Level Training Study*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1983): 11.

requirements were added as fundamental elements of the program. Within five years, before the notoriety gained by graduates in planning the Persian Gulf War, SAMS had established a reputation for intellectual rigor. By 1990, recognizing the impact made by SAMS graduates in the field, the Marine Corps instituted a similar program named the School of Advanced Warfighting at Quantico Marine Corps Base, and the Air Force formed the School of Advanced Airpower Studies at Maxwell Air Force Base. Both institutions replicated the concept of an advanced military education system to address the increasing complexity of warfare. In September of 2000, the Naval War College followed the example of the other services and commenced the Naval Operational Planner Course (NOPC). The NOPC curriculum is thirteen months long and provides officers in the ranks of Lieutenant Commander and Major with advanced warfighting planning knowledge and skills for follow-on assignments to operational planner billets.¹¹ NOPC graduated its first class of nine students--five Navy, one Army, two Marine Corps, and one Air Force in 2001.¹²

The purpose of SAMS, the curriculum, selection process, and post-SAMS assignment policies have remain relatively unchanged since its inception. For almost twenty years, SAMS graduates have been involved in planning every major operation in which the Army has been involved. What has continued to evolve throughout the school's tenure is the accelerated rate of change in service missions, technology, and battlefield conditions graduates must deal with upon arrival in the field. In addition to traditional war fighting, Army leaders from the tactical to strategic levels must be able to plan for and deal with increased political and cultural complexities of peace operations, stability and support operations, humanitarian interventions, forward presence and engagement, homeland defense, and more. Officers are routinely thrust into

¹¹Naval Operational Planner Course: General Information. Article on-line. Available from <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/jmo/nopc/information.htm>.

¹²Ibid.

volatile, complex, and ambiguous situations in which more is demanded of them in terms of intellect, initiative, responsibility, and leadership than was normally seen during the Cold War. According to Wass de Czege, the Army emerging in the wake of Vietnam and the Cold War required an educational system that developed a common cultural perspective on problem solving and war fighting that would facilitate the rapid adaptation to these types of realities.¹³ Today the tendency of an overburdened American military emphasizes action, not thoughtful reflection; yet never was thinking more necessary. The infusion of the Army with officers from SAMS with a common cultural base with similar mental references serves as a collective that can institutionalize military excellence and cope with complex problems at an educated level. The self-regenerating nature of SAMS removes any reliance upon the appearance of one or more military geniuses in the force because it consistently produces outstanding, competent officers. Over time, the common cultural bias established through advanced education can affect changes in service culture. Attempts to alter culture are understood to be difficult by nature. As one senior Marine has noted, “Military cultures are like great ocean liners or aircraft carriers: they require an enormous effort to change direction.”¹⁴ Incrementally, the effort can yield institutionalized military excellence. As the Army transforms to meet emerging security challenges and develops new weaponry, formations, doctrine, and training, it is imperative we also reexamine our approach to educating our officers; our profession’s agents of change.

The objective of this monograph is to determine the influence of the School of Advanced Military Studies in developing agents of change to shape the culture of our military. It examines the purpose and rationale for the school’s origin, and determines if the same purpose and rationale apply to the Army of 2003. Additionally, this monograph examines a model of how the Prussian, later German system of professional military education for their General Staff inculcated cultural

¹³Colonel Huba Wass de Czege, *Army Staff College Level Training Study* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1983): 2.

change, resulting in institutionalized military excellence, which yielded significant battlefield successes in the early twentieth century. This monograph attempts to answer the question regarding the ability of SAMS to influence cultural change in the face of the challenges of a changing operational environment, service transformation initiatives, and an increased emphasis on joint military operations. If the stated desired qualities and abilities expected of a SAMS graduate are inadequately supported by the current structure or focus of the program, the monograph will conclude with possible SAMS curriculum or policy changes.

¹⁴Williamson Murray, “Does Military Culture Matter?” *Orbis* (winter 1999): 135.
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CHAPTER 2

THE SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

War is the greatest auditor of military institutions.¹⁵

General William DePuy

The importance of advanced military education is demonstrated by the role it has played in military innovation and effectiveness in war throughout the twentieth century. To a large extent advanced military education has been the major factor in determining how military institutions adapt to the actual conditions of war. Those military institutions that took professional military education seriously performed well on the battlefield. When the concept of SAMS was being developed, CGSSC was devoted primarily to producing Army Majors who were well-rounded practitioners of tactics, only familiar with the broader aspects of strategy.¹⁶ These officers were not adequately equipped to become incubators of cultural change in the military.

The process of re-intellectualizing the officer corps at the intermediate level began at SAMS. Since its' inception, the program has achieved acclaim for the quality of SAMS graduates and for the contributions made in command and staff positions throughout the Army and the joint services. General Wass de Czege's concept of investing in bright young officers for the long term has reaped immeasurable benefits to the Army.

Colonel James Greer, the director of SAMS from June 2001 to June 2003, expanded upon General Wass de Czege's vision for the output of the program. Greer articulated the desired

¹⁵Lieutenant General Leonard D. Holder Jr. and Williamson Murray, "Prospects for Military Education," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no.18 (spring 1998): 15.

¹⁶Ibid., 11.

output of the program in a student orientation briefing entitled, “Agents of Change” (see figure 1).¹⁷



SAMS Output - Officers...

With...

A thorough knowledge of military history, theory, & doctrine

Who can...

Think, Plan, Analyze, Decide & Communicate

Who are...

Agents of Change; dedicated to improving the armed forces

And can...

Lead a team in thinking all the way through a problem

While remaining...

Students of the military profession for the rest of their lives

Figure 1

The description of the SAMS graduate as an agent of change signals a powerful expectation of those attending the school and those serving in the field. The need to change will forever be a constant, just as man's natural tendency to resist it will remain. The ability to recognize the need for change in an institution as large and complex as the Army can be difficult. A natural tension exists between the immediate demands of current operations and the increasing rate of evolution in the methods, technology, and organizations of warfare. Graduates who possess a conceptual notion of what must be accomplished to fight, and win, in the battlefield

¹⁷Colonel James K. Greer, Orientation Briefing, *Agents of Change*, USACGSC, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS: June 2002, 14.

environments of today and tomorrow are equipped to identify problems within the institution and can effect orderly changes from within.¹⁸

Graduates must view themselves as co-creators of the Army culture who can provide the type of institutional leadership necessary to achieve change in an efficient and effective way. A change agent must be capable of understanding the pace of change an organization can tolerate. Upon defining what the problem is and identifying potential solutions, he must articulate courses of action to convince decision-makers of the necessity of change to the organization. A change agent must also demonstrate excellence in core competencies to have credibility with the decision-makers.

The self-awareness of the SAMS graduate, attributable to intensive study and reflection, results in the ability to understand confidently articulate even the most complex issues. Another trait necessary to a change agent is adaptability. Adaptability is the ability to recognize changes to the environment, assess those changes, and determine what is new and what needs to be learned to be effective.¹⁹ Self-awareness and adaptability are symbiotic. Adaptability without self-awareness is irrationally changing for change sake, not understanding the relationship between abilities, duties, and the environment.²⁰

Periods of change have never been easy and the risks involved with making fundamental changes are high. As time becomes more compressed with rapid technological advances, unforeseen security threats, and new missions, the importance of identifying opportunities for effective change earlier in time is crucial to reduce the chance for failure when conflict arises. According to Dr. James Schneider, Professor of Military Theory at SAMS, “In the long run intellectual preparedness loses war; in the short run it leads to the demoralization and

¹⁸General Donn A. Starry, “To Change an Army,” *Military Review* (March 1983): 27.

¹⁹United States Army. The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army, Fort Leavenworth, KS (May 25, 2001): OS-3.

disintegration of whole armies.”²¹ SAMS emphasizes the intellectual development of adaptive leaders, who in the absence of certainty, can adjust to rapid changes in mission and environment as a matter of routine.

For many students attendance at SAMS marks a career transition point where future assignments involve indirect leadership roles in staff organizations. These officers have already demonstrated successful performance in leadership positions at the tactical level. This shift in required professional expertise from direct to indirect leadership is tied to the difference between training and education. Knowing how to think versus what to think requires a shift in perspective from an officer who has achieved success at performing requisite tasks and meeting standards at the tactical level, to an officer expected to generate solutions to complex problems spanning from the tactical to even the strategic level. Strong leadership is mandatory and not a product of duty position. Countless historical examples exist of men who were outstanding direct leaders in charge of formations that were appropriate for their direct-level leadership skills, but who were relatively ineffective when placed in command of larger units that required indirect-level leadership as well. To be capable of contributing to the betterment of the armed forces throughout the span of a career, officers must be prepared mentally and physically to serve in command or staff positions at every echelon relative to their rank. British military historian Michael Howard suggests officership is the most demanding profession both in a physical and mental sense.²² The Army requires sound institutional leadership as well as strong individual leadership. As future planners, SAMS students require the additional expertise found in fellow

²⁰Ibid.

²¹James J. Schneider, Ph.D., “How War Works: The Origins, Nature, and Purpose of Military Theory,” USACGSC, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS (16 June 2001): 3.

²²Michael Howard, “The Use and Abuse of Military History,” *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute* (January 1962): 4-10.

officers and non-commissioned officers and must develop staff integration skills. This makes it especially critical that our field grade officers are educated about how to influence and contribute to any military organization to which they are assigned. Practical exercises conducted throughout SAMS academic year provide the opportunity to focus on leading planning staffs and collaborating with peers.

The SAMS program of instruction rests on four primary curriculum pillars: theory, history, campaign planning and exercises, and supporttaskings.²³ These four aspects are mutually reinforcing and thus provide a penetrating outlook toward the future by melding together the theoretical, the empirical, and the practical aspects of military education²⁴. Historians have often suggested that many armies have studied experiences from only their recent conflicts, resulting in poor performance in the next. In contrast, the SAMS approach to studying military history, theory and doctrine is holistic in nature, with analysis of wars and campaigns conducted through a lens of width, depth and context. The student captures a sense of the enduring body of principles of warfare that have not changed in centuries. These principles are supplemented by the study of doctrine--“fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives.”²⁵ The intent is that the SAMS student becomes comfortable with the enterprise of warfare; not simply just collecting skills to be utilized in a subsequent assignment as a division or corps plans officer. It is also important to note that SAMS students are expected to look beyond the boundaries of doctrine so as not to become a hostage to it. In May, 2001, the Army Training and Development Panel reported that “to move ahead, the Army must be willing to challenge everything from FM 7–0

²³James J. Schneider, Ph.D., “What if we Fight Tonight? Advanced Military Education for the XXIst Century,” *Army Magazine* (November 1996): 10.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵United States Army, Field Manual 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, 1-55.

(25–100), *Training the Force*, and FM 7–10 (25–101), *Battle Focused Training*; to OERs; to OPMS XXI; to unit status reporting; to the way the Army designs forces, assigns operational missions, and allocates resources.²⁶ The SAMS graduate is expected to lead the effort to challenge doctrine and common understandings of Army culture in order to validate or improve upon them. The SAMS seminar provides the forum that encourages debate, which potentially serves to refine employment concepts for future operations or doctrinal constructs.

The increasingly complex environment and the time to logically think through tough military problems and to develop logical thought patterns have been greatly reduced.²⁷ SAMS equips its students to learn to view problems holistically in terms of nonlinear, complex-adaptive thinking. The first step in problem solving, which is often a point of failure, is framing the problem correctly. Far too often, much more time is spent by military organizations developing solutions without a proper diagnosis of a problem. Once the problem is defined, a plan of action for a positive aim rather than a negative aim can be formulated, employing methods to seek an advantage over an opponent. Similar to an athlete who has prepared for a race, the SAMS student has trained mentally and possesses a greater capacity to define the problem sets and the possible solution sets that face the armed forces in the coming years.

SAMS students are coached intensively to improve communication skills by using their knowledge of history, theory, and practice to structure and win a debate. The use of storytelling to communicate values, philosophy, competencies, or to share ideas is emphasized. Articulating critical issues to those in power who make decisions is a fundamental skill for the SAMS student to master.

²⁶United States Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army, Fort Leavenworth, KS (May 2001): OS-7.

²⁷General Donn A. Starry, “To Change an Army,” *Military Review* (March 1983): 7-28.

A characteristic of Army culture should be the commitment of its leaders to lifelong learning. There is a need for lifelong learning because the world is in a constant state of change and because the military art requires lifelong study to become truly proficient. All professional officers need to continue their education and develop their intellectual capacity throughout their careers. We should renew ourselves constantly. For many, attendance at SAMS is an intellectual reawakening that is carried with them and transmitted to their gaining organizations. Continuous learning by successful adults is difficult but essential to modern organizations. In describing his intent for educating SAMS students, Huba Was de Czege articulated his goal “to develop expert learners who think like commanders and who understand what goes on in those goose eggs and attack arrows on the graphics on the map.”²⁸ If operational art entails a feel for the troops, a human touch, and a psychological connection between leaders and led, then the way to accomplish this is for a significant personal commitment to the study of military art and science.²⁹ SAMS develops in its students an understanding that the learning process has just begun and continues upon return to the field.

The mission statement of SAMS is to “educate officers at the graduate level in military art and science in order to produce leaders with the flexibility to solve complex problems in peace, conflict, and war.”³⁰ The SAMS graduate must be an adept problem-solver, and agent of change, and a life-long learner. The impact of SAMS over time is not just the addition of a competent staff officer to the force, but also an intellectually vibrant and adaptive corps of officers who are capable of shaping the future of the service.

²⁸Huba Wass de Czege, *Army Staff College Level Training Study*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1983): 7.

²⁹Montgomery C. Meigs, “Operational Art in the New Century,” *Parameters*. (spring 2001): 5.

³⁰School of Advanced Military Studies Mission Statement as posted on internet homepage, <http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/sams/>.

CHAPTER 3

MILITARY CULTURE

There must be a great destruction, both in the physical and in the intellectual world, of old buildings and old boundaries and old monuments and, furthermore, of customs and ideas, systems of thoughts and methods of education.³¹

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines culture as the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.³² In an essay entitled, "Does Military Culture Matter?" military scholar Williamson Murray describes military culture as the representation of the ethos and professional attributes, both in terms of experience and intellectual study, that contribute to a common core understanding of the nature of war within military organizations.³³ In a study of the Army officer corps, the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) described Army Culture as an interwoven mixture of interdependent systems characterized by beliefs and practices.³⁴ Culture is the essential common understanding that enables organizations to function as unitary wholes. The services are the custodians of military culture, training and education, technology development and acquisition, and the understanding of the application of military power.

Change is characteristic of military culture because of the many influences that constantly affect the values, behavior, beliefs, and complexity of modern warfare that together defines it.

³¹Elting Elmore Morrison, *Men, Machines, and Modern Times* (Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1966): 14.

³²*The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1997): 425.

³³Murray, "Does Military Culture Matter?" *Orbis* (winter 1999): 134.

³⁴ United States Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2001): OS-8.

The focus of leadership of the military services should be not be on debate on whether or not it needs to transform, but how it needs to respond to those influences. However, the natural human tendency is to resist change. Many senior leaders who control the direction of their military organizations spend the most productive years of their lives in service to the nation tend to find the definition of their whole being within it.³⁵ Opposition to change springs from the normal human instinct to protect oneself, and more especially, one's way of life. For example, some military organizations are like their own societies built around and upon prevailing weapons systems. Instinctively, members of these organizations may feel threatened when a change in a weapon represents a change in the arrangements of their society. As a result, services cling to established ways of war, and to combinations of technology, organization, and personnel systems that have come to acquire value in and of themselves, even if they are no longer entirely functional.

In the military, segments of the services often work at cross-purposes. There is no common cultural perspective across the services.³⁶ There exist strong service prejudices and biases on many issues involving current change. At the same time, each service contains dissident or innovative groups of officers who are keen to experiment with new techniques that could result with such historical impact as the mechanization of horse cavalry. Behind them are far greater numbers of junior officers ready to experiment with new technologies and operational concepts that can make the seemingly impossible, reality. These agents of change should be cultivated and supported in their role to improve the effectiveness of the Army. Their mandate requires the continuous questioning of common understandings and the identification of levers to create change in them, because organizational transformation cannot happen unless common

³⁵Elting Elmore Morrison, *Men, Machines, and Modern Times* (Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1966): 34-35.

³⁶Murray, “Does Military Culture Matter?” *Orbis* (Winter 1999): 144-145.

understandings change first. The first step in influencing Army culture is to recognize that training, education and leader development has a direct impact on it. However, the American military has not always demonstrated the commitment and investment necessary to shape its culture in a positive manner. The quality of American professional military education has been identified in the past as a negative factor affecting military cultural climate, highlighted specifically in a devastating House Armed Services Committee report in the late 1980s.³⁷

Historians have suggested that armies study only the last war, resulting in poor performance in the next conflict. In Eliot Cohen's and John Gooch's book, Military Misfortunes, The Anatomy of Failure in Warfare, the institutional and catastrophic failure of four nations militaries over a period of sixty years is attributed to failing to learn from past experience, failing to anticipate the future, and failing to adapt to the future.³⁸ There is a consistent historical pattern of military organizations attempting to impose their prewar concepts of future combat on the actual conditions of war instead of adapting to those conditions. The story of France's failure in World War II illustrates the complexity and difficulty of formulating an effective doctrine. Leading up to the war, the French army trained, organized and equipped essentially for another World War I. This was derived from their past experiences with emphasis on the destructiveness of firepower, the strength of the defense, the ascendancy of the methodical battle, and the unifying power of the commander.³⁹ Men tend to continue the patterns of behavior developed in earlier conditions into the new, often quite different conditions set forth by the introduction of

³⁷United States Congress. Committee on Armed Services. Panel on Military Education. Report of the Panel on Military Education of the One Hundredth Congress. Committee print. One Hundred First Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. G.P.O., 1989): 206 (also known as the Skelton Report) [CIS 89-H205-5].

³⁸Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 1-23.

³⁹Robert Allan Doughty, *The Seeds of Disaster* (Connecticut: The Shoe String Press, 1985): 186.

different mechanisms. The Germans took full advantage of French ineptness and attacked their vulnerabilities with tanks, mobile artillery and airplanes to provide the shock, speed, and mobility necessary to collapse the French defenses.

Another major factor impacting military culture is the generational change that occurs in military organizations as the collective experiences of the senior officer corps evolve with the passage of time. Such a change has been occurring in the American military over the past decade as the Vietnam War generation has reached retirement. When such change in the collective experiences of the officer corps occurs, officers come to view the world differently. A study on military culture conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies identified differing perceptions across the ranks of junior and senior officers on issues ranging from agreement by senior leaders to take on missions that have stressed their forces beyond what some think are prudent limits to assessments of readiness that did not match perceptions at lower levels.⁴⁰ These negative perceptions and the cultural divide attributed to a lack of understanding between Generation Xers and Baby Boomers resulted in a junior officer attrition crisis.⁴¹

The geographic framework within which military organizations operate also has a significant impact on military culture. The United States will always confront the problem of projecting military power across the world's oceans. The physical environments in which the armed forces operate differ radically from one another and result in narrow reactions to the different challenges posed by operating at sea, on the land, or in the air. The four services, reflecting their different operating environments and histories have evolved their own differing

⁴⁰Leonard Wong, *Generations Apart: X'ers and Boomers in the Officer Corps* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, October, 2000): 4.

⁴¹Ibid., 3-9.

cultures.⁴² These differences will continue to shape how airmen, sailors, soldiers, and marines view war, even though the military leaders emphasize the need for a more joint force.

Anti-intellectualism in the American military and the belief that the only effective school of war is the battlefield itself is a negative influence on Army culture.⁴³ The increased complexity of military missions today with increased reliance on information and advanced technology places greater reliance on intellectual skills among leaders. However, deference to officers orientated to action versus contemplation, and the lack of time, interest or capacity to broaden the base of knowledge of history, theory, or doctrine threatens the intellectual condition of our officer corps. The following quote reflects the potentiality of such a condition, “one of the greatest dangers must come from this very source, when the number of half-educated people is greatest, when the world is full of people who know too much to recognize their limitations but know too much to follow loyally the direction of better qualified leaders.”⁴⁴ Another dangerous aspect of military culture is a propensity to shut down debate under the auspices of becoming a team player. The lack of appreciation for the challenging of common beliefs in order to validate or invalidate them is more than threatening to those within the cultures who enforce or seek conformity.

There are no short-term solutions to problems in military culture.⁴⁵ Those interested in shaping military culture must recognize instead that reforms, changes in emphasis, or even radical surgery will not yield immediate results. An effective change in military culture can only occur over a period of decades, and it is as likely that unintended effects of reforms on the cultural

⁴²Murray, “Does Military Culture Matter?” *Orbis* (Winter 1999): 144-145.

⁴³Colonel Lloyd J. Matthews, “The Uniformed Intellectual and His Place in American Arms: Part I,” *Army Magazine* vol. 52, no. 7 (July 2002): 1-8.

⁴⁴Elmore Morrison, *Men, Machines, and Modern Times* (Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1966): 14.

⁴⁵Murray, “Does Military Culture Matter?” *Orbis* (winter 1999): 135.

patterns of an organization may be more significant than intended effects.⁴⁶ It is clear that the education institutions of the military, such as SAMS, can influence and even change the attitudes, beliefs, and common understandings graduates will carry forth into positions of influence inside the institutions of the Army. Applying focus to officers' personal and professional expectations from their experiences, emphasizing officers' intellectual attainments as well as performance in leadership positions, shaping a common Army understanding of what it means to serve, and infusing the whole army with these cultural attributes can change the culture over time.⁴⁷ The Army's agents of change, those who graduate from its premier learning organizations such as SAMS, must focus on steering the culture toward institutionalized excellence.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷United States Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 25 May 2001): OS-10.

CHAPTER 4

THE GERMAN MILITARY AND INSTITUTIONALIZED EXCELLENCE

The U.S. Army lacked that great strength of the German system—the intellectual prowess and staff brilliance of its general staff officer corps. U.S. Army officers lacked the cultural commonality that was brought to bear through the process of the German General Staff system, and that was the most effective catalyst in making it possible for them to change quickly—even under the pressures of wartime.⁴⁸

General Donn A. Starry

Culture is the essential common understanding that enables organizations to function as unitary wholes. Culture's agents of change question these common understandings and identify levers to create change in the culture. There are historical examples of modern military organizations that have been effective in shaping culture to attain high performance on the battlefield. Evidence of such change can be found in the study of the history of the German Army. In a close examination of German combat superiority in the early twentieth century, Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy in his book, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945*, attributed the quality of German military power to the successful education, organization and operation of the Prussian General Staff, which later became the German General Staff.⁴⁹ The General staff's primary function was to examine the need for change and, when change was decided on, to draw up the necessary programs to make it happen.⁵⁰

Dupuy's research indicates that on average, German units in World War II battles demonstrated a thirty percent combat effectiveness superiority per man over the Americans and

⁴⁸General Donn A. Starry, "To Change an Army," *Military Review* (March 1983): 27.

⁴⁹Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: the German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977): 302.

⁵⁰General Donn A. Starry, "To Change an Army," *Military Review* (March 1983): 22.

British units at the time of the Salerno landings in Italy in 1943.⁵¹ Dupuy's analysis also indicates that this superiority had only diminished to about twenty percent by mid-1944.⁵² A less detailed analysis of World War I battles suggested a similar twenty percent combat effectiveness superiority over the Western Allies.⁵³ Former soldiers who had fought the Germans in both World Wars were particularly impressed by the resilience, imagination, and initiative demonstrated by soldiers at all levels.⁵⁴ Dupuy believed that his extensive research indicated that the Germans discovered the secret of institutionalizing military excellence.⁵⁵

The German Army, however, was not without its failures. The principal failure of German military institutions in World War I and World War II was a failure in strategic conceptualization. Technical and tactical competence could not compensate for bungling and mismanagement at the strategic level. Particularly, the land-minded German generals had no understanding of the strategic significance of sea power or an adequate understanding of the military potential of Russia and the United States. Regardless, Dupuy felt that the factors relevant to the German experience were worthy of reflection in considerations to improve the effectiveness of the United States military.⁵⁶

The roots of German military effectiveness can be traced back to the Prussian military reform movement of 1807 and the vision of the appointed head of the King's Military Reorganization Commission, Major General Gerhard Johan David von Scharnhorst. Scharnhorst's objective was to reorganize the Prussian professional military education system

⁵¹Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: the German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977): 4.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., 5.

following the army's defeats by Napoleon. A key component of the reform was the reconstitution in 1810 of the Military School for Officers, later to be known as the Kriegsakademie. In contrast to the successful military system of Frederick the Great which had eventually culminated with Prussian defeats at Jena-Austerstadt, Scharnhorst's system was intended to be dynamic and was developed to be responsive to the direction of a self-perpetuating institution of highly educated professional men, the General Staff. This system would not be dependent upon the random appearance of great leaders, because it would routinely produce outstanding officers. The General Staff was intended to be a highly trained, carefully selected, group of military generalists whose function in peace or war is to assist the nation's military leadership--or a general commanding a field force of combined arms elements--in planning, controlling, directing, coordinating, and supervising the activities of all military subordinate elements in the most effective way possible, mutually supporting efforts to achieve an assigned goal or objective, or in maximum readiness to undertake such efforts.⁵⁷ The leader or leadership makes decisions and issues commands, while the General Staff's responsibility is to provide all possible support to assure that the decisions and commands are timely, sound and effective.

A fellow reformer of Scharnhorst, Karl von Grolman, Chief of the Prussian General Staff, devoted particular attention to the improvement of officer education, first by establishing high intellectual standards as a prerequisite to obtaining a commission, and then by constantly improving the military schooling system. Grolman insisted upon frequent rotation of officers between the line regiments and the General Staff. Within the General Staff there were also frequent rotations between the Second Department offices in Berlin and the troop General Staff assignments in corps and divisions.

The state of the Prussian military improved steadily for over four decades with the influx of Kriegsakademie graduates and their positive influence in effecting change throughout the

⁵⁶ Ibid., 312-315.

organization. General Eduard von Puecker, Prussian chief of military training during the 1860s wanted to ensure that the Kriegsakademie would not be just a professional school but a university, the seat of higher military learning that would originate new ideas and spread them throughout the army.⁵⁸ It was to open its doors “to a group of exceptionally talented, professionally committed officers of all arms who were already in possession of an adequate military-scientific education, and wished to extend it.”⁵⁹ It offered them both “a first class, in depth, professional education” and “higher formal instruction in those sciences which should be regarded either as the foundations of military art or as auxiliaries thereto.”⁶⁰ The system of selection, three years’ practical and theoretical training, and a probationary period ensured that the officer serving on the General Staff would be thoroughly trained and competent. It also ensured that the army’s key officers, those on the staffs of major formations and those appointed to the general staff in Berlin, would share a common outlook and common language. Equally as important were the relationships and esprit de corps it fostered among a relatively small body of elite personnel, destined to occupy senior positions throughout the army. Uniformity of thought in turn enabled the army to give individual commanders a large measure of independence, and served later as the basis for the command system known as Auftragstaktik (mission-type orders), which was later introduced by Moltke and which constituted a key element in the army’s success.⁶¹ Prussian military accomplishments of the mid-nineteenth century were the result of evolving Prussian military excellence, not of the fortunate appearance of one or more military

⁵⁷Ibid., 48.

⁵⁸Martin Van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 26.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: the German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977): 307.

geniuses. Victories over Napoleon at Leipzig and Waterloo, rapid and decisive mid-nineteenth century triumphs over Denmark, Austria, and France, and the demand for German advisors to assist countries from around the world were testaments to the effectiveness of the product of the Prussian military education system prior to 1914. The collective brain of the General Staff had brought institutionalized military excellence to Prussia, and this model would continue to effectively serve Germany until its defeat in 1945.

Of all the world's military organizations during the interwar period, the German Army took professional military education the most seriously. One gained entrance to the Kriegsakademie only by passing a rigorous examination that lasted sixteen hours, and only a small percentage of the officer corps was able to pass that hurdle. Even then, not all those admitted to the Kriegsakademie completed the two-year course. In the process of educating its officers, the general staff stressed careful, thorough study not only of the recent past, but military history in general. According to military historian Martin van Creveld, the success of the Kriegsakademie was due to numerous factors. The most important ones were:⁶²

- (1) the rigorous system for selecting students
- (2) the three-year integrated curriculum, which for all the changes that it underwent never lost sight of the fact that its overriding function was to prepare officers for conducting war in the field
- (3) the high status and pay accorded the faculty
- (4) the system whereby the academy itself served as a vehicle for selection—that is, not all those who studied graduated or were taken into the general staff
- (5) the preferred promotion given to graduates
- (6) the high social prestige enjoyed by the army in general, which meant that study at the academy was considered at least on a par with attendance at any civilian university

⁶²Martin Van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 100-101.

The method of instruction was predominantly practical. There was heavy emphasis on independent written work by the students, who were given problems and had to hand in solutions that were criticized by the faculty. Often they had to work under deadline pressure, a method that supposedly reproduced the stress of battle to some extent. There was no specialization, with officers from every branch working together to produce a well-integrated team. The overall goal was to produce a body of military experts thoroughly familiar with every aspect of their profession, capable of taking over from each other at a moment's notice.⁶³

A German officer was never selected for the General Staff unless he was perceived to have demonstrated vigor, courage, and a strong character, as well as above-average intelligence. A unique trait of the German Army was its systematic efforts to make first-rate soldiers as well as independent-minded scholars out of any man who gave evidence that he could combine these characteristics. The officers of the German General Staff were the elite of the Army, carefully selected through a process far more rigorous and deliberate than any other army. The German General Staff operated with focus on the following tenets⁶⁴:

- Selection
- Examination
- Specialized training
- Historical study emphasis
- Inculcation of the initiative
- Responsibility
- Goal of technical-tactical perfection
- Objectivity in analysis

⁶³Ibid., 29.

⁶⁴Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: the German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977): 303-307.

-Regeneration

-Leavening process

Selection of officers for the German General Staff was extremely rigorous and deliberate, ensuring only the best minds of the nation were accepted. Examinations for selection and promotion were intensive and contributed to better professional understanding across the Army. Specialized training in the form of thorough schooling, practical staff exercises, and exercises dominated the development of every General Staff officer. The study of military history was heavily emphasized to acquire the theoretical foundations of military science and to gain an appreciation for human performance under the stresses of combat. The aspects of initiative and imagination in military performance, which characterized the German Army in both world wars, were the foremost areas of emphasis in military training.⁶⁵ Acceptance of responsibility in owning up to and rectifying deficiencies or injustices, regardless of personal risk or danger was expected behavior of the General Staff officer. The goal of tactical-technical perfection was characterized by unceasing efforts to improve conceptual doctrine and tactics as well as practical training and performance. Staff analysis and estimates were expected to be prepared with complete objectivity. This applied to analysis of causes for German defeats or failures, as well as for analysis of non-German armies. Regeneration of the General Staff assured by the careful selection process, deliberate efforts to avoid the stagnation of practices and customs, and the constant emphasis on high standards perpetuated the vibrant nature of the Staff. Finally, the leavening process extended the cultural influence of the General Staff across the army by means of officers exposed to specialized education and training comparable to the standards of the General Staff, the voracious reading of military journals by the officer corps which included the writings of General Staff officers, and the inclusion of at least one or two General Staff officers in

⁶⁵Ibid., 304.

each division. The quality education of officers and the organization of the General Staff was a powerful combination that led to the exceptional military performance.

The Kriegsakademie and the General Staff became the world's model for advanced military learning and staff organization. For military and social reasons, armed forces such as France, Britain, Russia, and even the United States were never as single-minded in adopting the German system and consequently never replicated the high standards and results.⁶⁶ For more than a century there were occasional efforts by some American military leaders who were impressed by the efficiency of the German General Staff to get that system, or some of its features, adopted by the United States Army. In the wake of inefficient performance during the Spanish-American War, Secretary of War Elihu Root made efforts to create an American General Staff using the German model to improve military effectiveness.⁶⁷ Root's initiative was denounced by then Commanding General of the Army, Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles as an effort to create an alien, Teutonic militarism in the United States.⁶⁸ Although the American Army did not adopt the German General Staff model, Secretary Root had recognized the "rapid advance of military science" and the subsequent need for a "thorough and broad education for military officers."⁶⁹ In 1903, Root's initiatives resulted in the formation of a two year advanced education program consisting of an Infantry and Cavalry School and a Staff College. This second year of advanced

⁶⁶Martin Van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 101.

⁶⁷Timothy K. Nenniger, *The Leavenworth Schools: Postgraduate Military Education and Professionalization in the US Army, 1881-1918* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978): 54.

⁶⁸Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: the German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977): 311.

⁶⁹Timothy K. Nenniger, "The Leavenworth Schools: Postgraduate Military Education and Professionalization in the US Army, 1880-1920" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1974), 98.

academic military would have an intermittent history until 1936, when such a program would disappear from the United States Army's landscape for almost fifty years.

In a unique opportunity in 1936, American Army Captain Albert C. Wedermeyer, described by British military historian John Keegan as "one of the most influential officers of the U.S. Army at the moment when it emerged as a world force," had the privilege of attending the Kriegsakademie.⁷⁰ Possessing an undistinguished record as a cadet at West Point, thirty-nine-year old Wedermeyer doggedly pursued his studies at the United States Army Command and General Staff School in 1934 to redeem himself. Following completion of the course, the War Department selected Wedermeyer for a two-year tour as an exchange student at the Kriegsakademie in Berlin. This period of intense study was a turning point in his career. Following his return from Germany in 1938, Wedermeyer thoroughly impressed the American General Staff, and in particular Brigadier General George Marshall, with a definitive report on German training and education methods and their rapidly expanding forces, to include details on their organization, equipment, doctrine, and morale. Wedermeyer subsequently established himself as a distinguished military planner, formulating the famed Victory Plan, a broad blueprint for American participation in a possible war against the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Later in his career as chief strategist of the War Department, he played a major role in shaping U.S. and Allied global strategy, including plans for the invasion of Europe. During the later war years, he served with Allied forces in Southeast Asia and commanded U.S. forces in China. Following World War II, he undertook a diplomatic mission to the Far East and wrote report, which figured importantly in the controversies and debate that followed the fall of China to the communists in 1949. Wedermeyer made many significant contributions to the nation throughout and following

⁷⁰Keith E. Eiler, *Wedemeyer on War and Peace* (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1987): vii.

his military service, but he always attributed much of his personal success with his development at the Army Command and General Staff College and the German Kriegsakademie.⁷¹

The success of the Kriegsakademie is an example of how modern military organizations can be effective in shaping culture to attain high performance on the battlefield. The education of a highly selective group of high-quality officers provided the common cultural bias and conceptual framework the General Staff utilized to effect change within the army in time of peace or war. The General Staff was then adequately equipped to examine the need for change and, when change was decided on, to draw up the necessary programs to make it happen. By a process of continual renewal, adequate resourcing, and adherence to high academic and performance standards, the advanced military educational institution of Germany set the conditions for the General Staff to inculcate the culture and institutionalize excellence. In turn, the General Staff created an army that consistently outfought its opponents. Although several nations attempted to model the excellence of the officer education system and the General Staff structure, none achieved similar success. Although the German Army is certainly not without its failures in history, modern militaries would be served well in studying the organizational phenomena of their military institutions in creating such a high-performing fighting force.

⁷¹Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958): 17.

CHAPTER 5

THE FUTURE

As the SAMS program nears its twentieth year of existence, there are several new conditions that its graduates will encounter. The first condition is the rapidly changing operational environment. The second condition involves the military service's attempts to transform to adapt to the new realities of the evolving operational environment. The third condition relates to the foreseeable future when the force will demand staff officers who are increasingly well versed in Joint operations, because operational maneuver is a joint activity and the current PME structure is not meeting the needs of the force. The American military today faces challenges certainly more complex, if in some respects less daunting, than those of the Cold War. To understand the politics of obscure corners of the world, to integrate new technologies, and to create new systems of organization and discipline, the military will require the first-rate thinkers developed in the seminar rooms of SAMS.

The operational environment has been evolving rapidly since 1989 with the fall of the Iron Curtain and breakup of the Warsaw Pact. The next few decades will surely reveal unforeseen threats requiring American military intervention in unstable environments. The Army confronts uncertainties and ambiguities as to where, when, and for what it will fight. The Army has recognized for a decade the need to change to remain relevant to the strategic environment. Left to its own devices, it has been slow to adapt and it continues to fall behind in adapting training and leader development programs.⁷² Observations from the Army Training and Leadership Development Panel (ATLDP) conclude that the operational environment has changed faster than the Army has adapted its training and leader development programs.⁷³ Consequently, these

⁷²United States Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 25 May 2001): OS-6.

⁷³Ibid.

programs are being reviewed and changed quickly to become relevant. The Panel found significant evidence that current programs and resourcing are not working.⁷⁴ The Army is already implementing changes to the Officer Education System (OES) to improve the preparation of field grade officers in planning and executing full spectrum operations at the tactical and operational levels. The new security environment has also changed the relationship between the levels of war in ways that must be considered when determining an effective way to educate officers for the future. Today's young officer is much more likely to be confronted by decisions that may have operational or even strategic consequences than were his Cold War predecessors. Missions in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo or Iraq are more politically and culturally complex than were most Cold War missions. Consequently, we must consider this in educating and developing officers to deal with the growing levels of complexity on the battlefield. Education and training must be designed to accommodate uncertainty to foster a culture of institutional initiative and self-reliance.⁷⁵

The ATLDP outlined specific requirements for leader development for the Objective Force. The Army depends on leaders and units that have the requisite leader competencies to execute full spectrum operations. They must thrive in a complex environment marked by the challenge of high-intensity combat and the ambiguities inherent in stability operations and support operations. They require competencies that are matched to those new operating conditions and that support the requirement for lifelong learning, which emphasizes the leadership skills and attributes to help the leader and unit:

- Become aware of the need for new competencies in rapidly changing environments.
- Know how to develop those new competencies.
- Transfer that learning and associated competencies to other leaders and units.
- Institutionalize learning in the Army's culture and systems to increase self-awareness and adaptability. The Panel concluded that given the ambiguous nature of the Objective

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., OS-11.

Force's operational environment, Army leaders should focus on developing the "enduring competencies" of self-awareness and adaptability.⁷⁶

The Army has identified a disconnect between training and leader development in preparing its leaders for operations with the Objective Force in the full spectrum environment of Offensive Operations, Defensive Operations, Stability Operations, and Support Operations. This assessment of Army OES shortfalls is comparable to the period when SAMS was implemented to bridge shortfalls in the intellectual development of Army Majors graduating from CGSC.

The Army will undergo substantial transformation over the coming decades whether it wants to or not. No living organization can survive without change and the U.S. Army has a history of transformation efforts. Of all the transformations the Army has undergone, perhaps none was as remarkable as the transformation of the broken Army of the 1970s to the vibrant Army of the mid- to late 1980s. SAMS graduates and faculty played an integral role in facilitating that change. The intellectual and training journey that the Army underwent over the course of a decade created an entirely new Army. It possessed innovative and imaginative concepts honed by debate and equally important by experiments and exercises that ensured the relevance of doctrine and concepts. It also posed the challenge of fielding a wide array of new weapons systems that expanded the capabilities of the force.

The current Army Transformation strategy details how transformation supports sustained progress toward the attainment of the six critical operational goals for Transformation stated in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review.⁷⁷ It describes steps the Army is taking to create a culture of innovation that seeks to exploit and shape the changing conduct of military competition. The Army will explore new combinations of concepts, people, organizations, and technology in order to produce new or increased capabilities, protecting our Nation and the Joint Force against

⁷⁶Ibid., OS-3.

⁷⁷United States Army Transformation Roadmap. Article on-line, available from http://www.army.mil/vision/Transformation_Roadmap.pdf

asymmetric threats.⁷⁸ It includes a fundamental review of how The Army organizes, staffs, equips, trains, and develops its leaders to execute its doctrine in the 21st century. Transformation is fundamentally about changing the way we deploy, fight, sustain, and use information.⁷⁹ Transformation will provide new capabilities to the Joint Force Commander to enable the Joint Force to assure our allies and friends, dissuade military competition, deter aggression, and, if necessary, decisively defeat aggressors.⁸⁰

There are many who argue that transformation is about advanced technology and the advantages it provides us over our opponents with capabilities in computer technology and communication systems that will allow us to see and dominate activity throughout the wide expanse of the battlefield. Others have gone so far as to suggest that these advances will eliminate the fog and friction known on past battlefields by allowing commanders complete knowledge of the enemy. Regardless, without intellectual change, both the development and application of technology will be limited by old ideas. There exists a perceived lack of sympathy to the problems faced by the military in assimilating new technology. Technology cannot guarantee fighting power and there is potential danger of becoming satisfied and subject to stagnant concepts as a result of technological over-reliance. Sometime in the future the Army will confront an enemy who has prepared his forces to challenge the advanced capabilities of U.S. forces. Military planners have undoubtedly been guilty of grafting new weapons technology onto the pre-existing politico-strategic framework without realizing how that framework itself will be altered by the change in technique.⁸¹ It would seem appropriate of the Army today to examine

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Christopher Bellamy, *The Evolution of Modern Land Warfare--Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990): 44.

how our predecessors drove the processes of innovation and change so successfully barely two decades ago. Military transformation of our forces is an imperative if we are to be ready for the challenges of this new century. But transformation is first and foremost an intellectual exercise, requiring the brightest minds actively engaged in taking our armed forces to new and higher levels of effectiveness. Therefore, the road to transformation begins with a stronger program of education and leader development. This will provide the underpinning for experimentation with new ideas, equipment, and doctrine that will lead to a transformed force fully prepared for emerging threats.

Current and foreseeable conditions demand joint staff officers who are more knowledgeable and innovative, and more joint force commanders who are better prepared for their expanding duties and responsibilities.⁸² The progress made by PME institutions over the last decade in preparing our officers for the joint environment is only a start. currently, the service staff colleges aim at little more than inculcating established techniques and some degree of literacy in joint doctrinal issues. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, perhaps the 20th century's greatest practitioner of joint warfare, spoke about one of the most powerful lessons he drew from his experiences during the World War II: "Separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight it in all elements, with all services, as one single concentrated effort."⁸³ In similar tone, a study on Joint Professional Military Education in 1999 found that the Geographic Component Commanders believe officers need to be exposed to joint matters earlier in their career.⁸⁴ Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed*

⁸²Lieutenant General Leonard D. Holder Jr. and Williamson Murray, "Prospects for Military Education," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no.18 (spring 1998): 9.

⁸³United States Code Congressional and Administrative News 1958, President's Messages "Reorganization of the Department of Defense," special message submitted to Congress on April 3, 1958, 104th Congressional Record, 5608 (H. Doc 366), vol. 3, 5432.

Forces, advises us that “Campaigns of the U.S. Armed Forces are joint; they serve as the unifying focus for our conduct of warfare.”⁸⁵

As SAMS focuses on the operational level of war and campaign planning, it is certainly requires a sound and prominent foundation of joint study. The current state of officer Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) is unsatisfactory in meeting the needs of the military. Although Army officers graduating from JPME II and serving in joint billets agree the education assisted in preparing them for joint and multinational assignments, the throughput at the Armed Forces Staff College limits the numbers that can attend. Officers who had to wait one or more years, or who did not attend JPME II while assigned in a joint billet felt strongly that JPME II would have significantly improved their initial performance. JCS J7 Military Education Division indicates there is a JPME II training backlog of 2,500 officers for 9,066 joint positions because the Armed Forces Staff College only conducts three courses per year with 300 students each session.⁸⁶ Meanwhile our Allies are making considerable efforts to improve the state of JPME within their officer corps. A recent trend in foreign staff colleges has been to experiment with joint education. Germany has collocated its three staff colleges in Hamburg, where students from all services occasionally share courses or cooperate in exercises.⁸⁷ The British are making the most ambitious effort by eliminating service staff colleges and forming a single joint school.⁸⁸ At

⁸⁴United States Department of Defense, *Preparing the Total Force for Tomorrow's Challenge--Phase 2 Report on Course of Action Development* (Washington: Military Education Division, Joint Staff, J7, August 1999).

⁸⁵United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1:*Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2001): 63.

⁸⁶United States Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 25 May 2001): OS-12.

⁸⁷Lieutenant General Leonard D. Holder Jr. and Williamson Murray “Prospects for Military Education,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* no. 18 (Spring 1998): 13.

⁸⁸Ibid.

SAMS, evidence indicates a decline within the curriculum in the days apportioned for the instruction of joint subjects. The curriculum review in March 2002 increased the amount devoted to history and theory and reduced the course days allocated to Joint operations.⁸⁹ This may be an indication that the emphasis necessary to improve the SAMS student's knowledge base on joint operations is deficient.

⁸⁹William J. Gregor, Ph.D., Information Paper, *AMSP Curriculum Content Migration 1989-2003*, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 31 May 2002.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Almost twenty years after the creation of SAMS, the time has come to reassess and refine the role of one of the most successful advanced military education institutions our Army has known. Given the universal praise the school has earned throughout the past two decades, calls for change will likely result in resistance from those who may insist that there is no pressing need to tinker with what has been so productive. SAMS remains a shining example of intellectual development within the Army and garners respect from military services throughout the world. Although the fundamental reason for the creation of SAMS remains valid, the Army should recognize the changing operational environment and conduct a review of the school to improve its effectiveness in shaping the culture of our officer corps.

In early 2003, Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki announced the approval of a number of initiatives to transform the Officer Education System. The Army Training and Leader Development Panel officer study recommended many of the changes. This study identified two formative periods in an officer's career during which institutional training and education plays a critical role.⁹⁰ The first is initial entry, when the institution prepares officers to lead small units. The other formative period is associated with the officer's selection for promotion to major, when educational institutions prepare them for field-grade responsibilities. The Army is currently adapting OES structure, focus and curricula to prepare for a new operating environment characterized by regional threats, full spectrum operations, and Information Age technology. The Army also recognized that the curricula for lieutenants', captains' and majors' professional military education had to be rejuvenated to reflect how adults learn in today's environment and

⁹⁰United States Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 25 May 2001): OS-3.

ensure greater learning, development, and sustainment of critical leadership skills and attributes.⁹¹

Perhaps the Army's reassessment of its educational institutions signals an opportunity for SAMS to do the same. The changing character of war requires institutions to adapt. Over time, education is the means of making adaptation. Future applicants to SAMS will arrive with a different knowledge base than current students as a result of OES transformation. The relationship of SAMS to OES is mutual and therefore should be examined.

This monograph has examined history to determine the root causes for the formation of SAMS, its role in shaping the culture of the officer corps, and possible indicators for changes to improve the school in reflecting the needs of the force in the current operational environment. There are two possible courses of action concerning review and potential reform of SAMS: maintain the status quo by investing in existing systems, models and procedures, or establish new systems, models, and procedures from the best of existing programs to develop who the school describes as the Army's change agents. The latter course of action is the better way, but it will take leader resolve, focus, and resources to implement. The history of military innovation and effectiveness in the last century suggests a correlation between battlefield performance and how seriously military institutions regarded officer education.⁹² It is essential that our services devote substantially more resources to that end.

The criteria used to assess the SAMS program and its undertaking to develop agents of change are as follows:

(1) Is the institution subject to mechanisms to assist in identifying the need for and implementation of change in curriculum, faculty, or educational technology to support the director's vision?

(2) Do current Army personnel policies favorably affect SAMS attendance and post-graduation assignment guidelines?

⁹¹Ibid., OS-20.

⁹²Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 325-328.

(3) Does the level of commitment to joint professional military education in the SAMS curriculum reflect the guidance articulated in the Skelton Report?

(4) Does SAMS adhere to standards of rigor similar to that of the successful German model in the selection and evaluation of students?

(5) Are formal forums for collaboration between SAMS graduates and students established to facilitate learning and mentoring?

(6) Are students educated about the process of change and its effect on military culture?

Based upon my analysis utilizing these evaluation criteria, the following recommendations are offered as potential areas for further examination and improvement of the program:

External Review

The first priority is an external review of the SAMS program. A review panel should be constructed as a mechanism to identify the need for change, consisting of a mix of Active Duty and retired Army officers, as well as adult educators who possess an understanding of the history, spirit and intent of the program. A successful historical model for this panel could be the Haines Board, named for its president, Lieutenant General Ralph E. Haines, Jr.. Following Vietnam, Haines advocated revision of CGSC's mission and curriculum so that graduates would be conversant with staff procedures and operational concepts far beyond brigade and corps levels. Accordingly, college authorities initiated a professional electives program that consisted of courses designed to broaden the officers' understanding of defense policies, domestic politics, and international affairs.

Panel members should be considered for selection based upon their operational and educational experience. Fundamental to maintaining objectivity of the review is the lack of vested interest from the panel members in the outcome of the observations. A chairperson with the credibility of experience and professional reputation would serve as the spokesman for change, building consensus for new ideas and articulating the need to the senior leadership of the

Army to adopt them. The current curriculum should be examined closely to ascertain its effectiveness in developing competent planners as well as self-aware and adaptive leaders. Curriculum review facilitates adherence to the vision of the Director of SAMS, demonstrates commitment to continuous improvement, and displays willingness to challenge past practice. Feedback from Division and Corps Commanders on the observed performance and quality of SAMS graduates in the field should be considered. Graduates of SAMS who can measure the worth of the education as it relates to their personal experiences in the current operational environment can be queried for feedback as well. Input to the review panel from the student body about the curriculum and learning environment could also be considered. Students generally understand what their strengths and weaknesses are at this point in their education and have strong opinions about how well they feel the school is meeting their needs.

Standards of Rigor

Academic standards of rigor may be the most important issue in maintaining the overall quality of the program. Many nations failed to replicate the excellence of the Kriegsakademie as a result of the lack of attentiveness to firm academic standards and nebulous student selection criteria. A review committee should re-examine the standards of rigor as it relates to selection and evaluation of students, and the curriculum required to challenge critical thinkers. The legacy of the extremely demanding German entrance examinations continues today at the German Staff Colleges where attendance hinges on their results. One might not want to be as selective as the inter-war Germans were in determining who attends SAMS, but despite the calls for larger classes of graduates, SAMS could resist that effort and maintain a selection rate and class size that in effect, creates a strong distinction amongst the officers on active duty. The course has been expanding over time from 52 students in academic year 1988-1989 to 79 in AY 2002-2003. Educating a smaller percentage of the officer corps would allow more attention to individual

students, improve faculty quality, and raise educational standards. Although the German Army maintains a general staff system, the U.S. Army can still reap the benefits of a well-educated elite operating within our current command and staff constructs.

Joint Education

SAMS should seriously address joint education. As operational maneuver remains a joint activity, the depth and breadth of the joint instruction received in SAMS should be reviewed to support the needs of future operational planners. The school experience should be broadened far beyond the attendance of officers from the other services. Standards in joint education as outlined by the Skelton panel should be analyzed to determine if the school is achieving the standards set forth. An initiative to form a joint school similar in character and structure to SAMS should be considered. Despite the significant improvements that have already been made, steps can be taken to improve the quality of JPME. The J7, Joint Staff is currently contemplating such a school, which may be designated as the Joint Advanced Warfare School (JAWS)⁹³.

Through early support of this initiative, the Army could have significant developmental input into the design of the course. Most especially, faculty and students in the school could develop special expertise in the theory and practice of joint operations, and students could be prepared and slated for positions as war planners in joint commands. The establishment of JAWS would provide the joint community greater expertise than the services in the theory and practice of joint operations. Volunteer graduates of SAMS could compete for selection based on merit for an even more rigorous follow-on course of study at JAWS. Those who attend, graduate from, or teach at JAWS would develop joint warfighting skills to their highest levels and could become the premier war planners in joint commands.

⁹³Robert A. Doughty, "Reforming Joint Doctrine," *Parameters*, vol. 22, no. 3 (autumn 1992): 45.

Collaboration Opportunities

Efforts to facilitate collaboration and cross talk between SAMS students and graduates in the field should be implemented as a powerful learning tool. Options may be as simple as the establishment of formal SAMS web-based bulletin boards or message forums to showcase experiences in solving complex, real-world problems. Such an effort at inclusion would engender an awareness and feeling of connection among SAMS students and graduates, foster close interaction and teamwork, and create a climate of respect among these officers. Collaboration opportunities set the conditions for mentoring. Personal mentorship between students and experienced graduates and military planners is essential in filling information gaps, and mentorship provides another avenue to help motivate, educate and guide quality people to higher levels of performance and responsibility. Mentoring may be the critical missing element in helping compress a student's learning curve. With so much to know and so little time to apply to in-depth study, mentoring may be the most effective way to ensure professional development. The mentor can help students sort through information to identify the things that are really important. One of the most beneficial effects of mentoring is that it is self-perpetuating.

SAMS Faculty

The quality of the SAMS civilian, adjunct, and military faculty has been heralded for years, beginning with public acknowledgements by military leaders following successes in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. This quality and professionalism can and should be bolstered. The quality of any academic faculty determines the overall quality of the institution it serves. All too often, the Army OES has been limited by the failure of the personnel system to resource its academic institutions with the best and the brightest instructors. This is an intolerable condition that does not bode well for any military that takes professional military education seriously. The services were provided substantial authority by the Skelton Committee to hire the

most outstanding civilian academics available in the areas of strategy, strategic history, national defense economics, war studies, and national security studies. SAMS should be resourced to attract such talent, even if it involves the establishment of visiting professorships. This would ensure the continuous flow of new ideas into and out of the school. If SAMS is to retain its reputation for excellence in the future, it must engender faculty stability without stagnation. A mixed tenure long-term and short-term faculty would be the best approach to keep the institution fresh. This faculty mix would facilitate continuity while simultaneously leveraging the new perspectives, experiences, and instructional techniques of new staff members.

Leverage Technology

There is a role for technology in the schoolhouse. Modeling change is an essential element of the change process. Available off-the-shelf technology can help in modeling change while improving the learning experience of the SAMS student. Students should be issued personal data assistants or personal laptop computers with advanced software to improve productivity and facilitate simulations. This would also provide tangible evidence that SAMS graduates as agents of change, are forward thinking about technology and are not lagging behind society in its everyday use. There are cautions about technology, however. Although recent educational trends reflect heavy emphasis on distance and computer-centric learning, the business of soldiering will always be about people, requiring a SAMS experience heavy on personal interface with peers as a critical element for studying military art and science.

Impact of Changing OPMS

The Army's Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) has changed substantially since the inception of SAMS. A thorough analysis on its effects on SAMS and the school's ability to attract a field of high-quality candidates is integral in perpetuating excellence. After five years of implementing the OPMS XXI study, the Army has transitioned to OPMS III, the

third generation of the officer personnel management system.⁹⁴ One of its primary features is to develop officers with the right skills, knowledge, and attributes to meet the requirements of the 21st Century. Branches and functional areas have been grouped into four distinct career fields; Operations, Information Operations, Institutional Support, and Operational Support. One of the centerpiece issues of OPMS III is Intermediate Level Education (ILE), which will afford all those who remain in the operations career field an opportunity to attend CGSC to gain intellectual capital. In conjunction with OPMS III, the future holds some wholesale modifications to our personnel management system in the form of unit manning. The aim of unit manning is to increase readiness and unit cohesion by decreasing personnel turbulence. The Unit Manning Task Force formed from the Army G-1 is developing a system to replace the Army's current individual rotation concept with unit rotations.⁹⁵ These changes will most certainly impact the SAMS curriculum and selection process.

If an effect of OPMS III is to dissuade potential candidates from attendance because of officer personnel management realities and negative effects on career timelines, then the school will never attract officers with the highest aptitudes and talents. It should not be a career risk for an officer to attend an institution like SAMS. If the Army is truly a learning organization committed to a long-term development of its officer corps, it will find a way to make allowances for students to attend SAMS without being subject to penalty by centralized promotion or selection boards because of a lack of compliance with the conveyor-belt-like nature of present career timelines.

⁹⁴ Armor Branch Chief Update, Army PERSCOM On-line. Available from <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/OParmor/Armor%20Branch%20Chief's%20Update.htm>

⁹⁵Ibid.

Change Agents

SAMS must continually emphasize the graduate's role and responsibility as change agents for the Army and its culture. The network of SAMS graduates form an institutionalized framework which must continually assess and examine the need for changes in doctrine, training, leader development, organization, materiel, and soldier support (DTLOMS). Through course electives such as Leading Change or through a guest lecture program, substantive opportunities for students should be available to interface with subject matter experts, military or non-military that have experience in successfully effecting positive cultural change within complex organizations. The heart of a learning organization is the willingness to allow its people to suspend and question the assumptions within which they operate, then create and examine new ways of solving organizational problems and means of operating. Exposure to the fresh ideas and unique experiences of guest speakers can greatly enhance the learning experience and produce mental models to approach change. Faculty must assist in influencing student perceptions and attitudes of becoming co-creators of the military culture, rather than only being shaped by it. This is a key component in the cognitive development of the learner.

Travel

The student body should be exposed to supplemental learning opportunities outside the seminar room. Currently, students are afforded the chance to serve on support taskings that may range from a Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) Warfighter exercise to an operational contingency planning trip. These experiences provide valuable insights about their future role as planners. A weeklong Civil War Staff ride to Vicksburg, Mississippi has also been a longtime staple of the curriculum. In addition to these occasions, travel opportunities involving self-directed learning would also be useful to enrich the entire educational experience of SAMS. Self-

directed learning occurs when the learner chooses to assume the primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating the learning experience.⁹⁶ Students may choose, for example, to travel to study the cultural impact of drug trafficking in Colombia or to Israel to study military operations in urban terrain. When the experiences of these travels are brought back to SAMS, the result is the creation of a global classroom. Funding for travel expenses could be solicited from Training and Doctrine Command. The investment may be high, but the true value of the institution would be measured over time by the contributions of its graduates.

As Dr. Schneider, Professor of Theory at SAMS has articulated, “Today and in the future leadership will depend on its educational and intellectual foundation more than ever before.”⁹⁷ The emergence of SAMS in the 1980s reflected weaknesses in the Army culture and the educational institutions that sustained it. Many of the tools that served the Army well during the Cold War are no longer adequate. Over the past ten years the Army's institutional training and education system has attempted to remain relevant to the Operational Environment, but the basic structure and methods within the OES had not appreciably changed. OES also suffered from a lack of resources to provide quality educational experiences. OES is now adapting to meet the emerging requirements of full spectrum operations and the transforming Army.

On the eve of its twentieth anniversary, SAMS should also conduct a review of its systems and practices to ensure the year of expanded study remains well suited to the demands of the Army, the joint environment, and the students who graduate to positions of significant influence and responsibility. Graduates must be competent in planning and conducting joint and combined operations, bonded to the improvement of the Armed Forces. They must be cohesive as agents of change, be self-aware and adaptive, and remain committed to lifelong learning. A

⁹⁶Sharan B. Merriam and Rosemary Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 2d ed. (California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999): 288-307.

review of SAMS can ensure the maintenance of the highest standards and the programs adherence to the spirit and mission for which it was created.

Has SAMS achieved the purpose of establishing a common cultural bias within the United States officer corps that allows the ability to adapt rapidly to our increasingly complex world? The measure of effectiveness is difficult to quantify. It took the Prussians about sixty years to realize the full fruit of reform of its advanced educational institution and the implementation of the General Staff system. American military success on the battlefield, which in part can be attributed to the contributions of SAMS graduates, began in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and continues to this day. Graduates have infused the services with the same type of intellectual capital and professional commitment that the German General Staff accomplished in their army. There is little doubt that with the compression of time due to technological developments, military forces without a strong organization and a cadre of competent problem-solvers will fall victim to opponents who can adapt quickly and dominate their decision cycle. SAMS produces officers who can facilitate this adaptation and shape the culture of the military to achieve such effects. The regenerative nature of the program produces cascading effects that will inculcate the culture and perpetuate institutionalized excellence for years to come. However, the product of SAMS will only be as good as it has been educated and resourced. The prestige of any institution attracts quality. It is incumbent on the Army to ensure that the program which produces its organizational change agents look inward to continually reassess its status to seek renewal while deterring obsolescence.

⁹⁷James J. Schneider, Ph.D., “How War Works: The Origins, Nature, and Purpose of Military Theory,” School of Advanced Military Studies, USACGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 16 June 2001): 3.

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